



HR0549

LRB098 13300 GRL 47822 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom; and

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WHEREAS, The planning for the March on Washington was begun by A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin in December 1962; the pair envisioned 2 days of protest, which would include sit-ins and lobbying efforts, followed by a mass rally at the Lincoln Memorial; in early 1963, they called publicly for "a massive March on Washington for jobs"; and

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WHEREAS, On June 22, 1963, the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership, an umbrella group which would coordinate funds and messaging for the march, met with President John F. Kennedy, who warned against creating "an atmosphere of intimidation" by bringing a large crowd to Washington; undeterred by President Kennedy's words, the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership continued their planning of the march, with finalized plans announced in a press conference on July 2, 1963; and

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WHEREAS, After initial disagreements over the purpose of the march, the leaders of the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership decided upon a series of goals for the march,

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1 including the passage of meaningful civil rights legislation,  
2 the immediate elimination of school segregation, a program of  
3 public works, including job training, for the unemployed, a  
4 federal law prohibiting discrimination in public or private  
5 hiring, a nationwide minimum wage, the withholding of federal  
6 funds from programs that tolerate discrimination, the proper  
7 enforcement of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution by  
8 reducing congressional representation from States that  
9 disenfranchise citizens, a broadened Fair Labor Standards Act  
10 to currently excluded employment areas, and the granting of  
11 authority for the Attorney General to institute injunctive  
12 suits for constitutional right violations; and

13 WHEREAS, Traveling by road, rail, and air, more than 2,000  
14 buses, 21 chartered trains, 10 chartered airliners, and  
15 countless cars from throughout the nation arrived in Washington  
16 D.C. on August 28, 1963 in preparation for the march; the march  
17 began at the Washington Monument and ended at the Lincoln  
18 Memorial with a program of music and speakers; after the March,  
19 the speakers traveled to the White House for a discussion of  
20 proposed civil rights legislation with President Kennedy; and

21 WHEREAS, The March on Washington included many speakers who  
22 brought powerful messages of equality and humanity to the  
23 assembled masses; these speakers, dubbed "The Big Ten",  
24 included the leaders of the Council for United Civil Rights

1 Leadership, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish leaders, and  
2 labor leader Walter Reuther; the most resonant speech made  
3 during the march, however, was made by Dr. Martin Luther King,  
4 Jr., whose "I Have a Dream" speech is hailed as a cornerstone  
5 event in the civil rights movement; and

6 WHEREAS, The March on Washington and its message of  
7 equality and brotherhood are widely credited with the passage  
8 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of  
9 1965; and

10 WHEREAS, Today, many African-American communities still  
11 face endemic problems of widespread unemployment, high crime  
12 levels, and discrimination; African-American unemployment  
13 rates are more than twice the rate for whites in the State of  
14 Illinois, while African Americans are incarcerated at nearly 6  
15 times the rate of whites throughout the nation and account for  
16 75.5% of homicide victims in the State of Illinois; and

17 WHEREAS, The members of this body are proud to honor both  
18 the 50th anniversary of this historic event and the men and  
19 women who marched in solidarity to make it happen; we further  
20 commend the men and women who uphold the virtues of the March  
21 on Washington and continue the fight for equality and justice  
22 to this day; therefore, be it

1           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
2           NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
3           we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic March on  
4           Washington for Jobs and Freedom and pay tribute to those who  
5           marched in pursuit of freedom and justice for all; and be it  
6           further

7           RESOLVED, That we pledge our support to the men and women  
8           who continue the struggle for equal rights for all and commend  
9           them for their work in accordance with the principle of  
10          restorative justice.